

THE BLOOMFIELD CITIZEN

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

or

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WHILE IT IS THE FULL INTENTION OF THE EDITORS TO ALLOW THE LARGEST LIBERTY TO CONTRIBUTORS, IT MUST BE DISTINCTLY UNDERSTOOD THAT WE DO NOT THEREBY ENDORSE THEIR OPINIONS, OR ARE IN ANY SENSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEM.

NEWS ITEMS, NOTICES AND REPORTS MUST BE SENT TO THE OFFICE NOT LATER THAN THURSDAY EVENING OF EACH WEEK, IF THEY ARE TO APPEAR IN THE CURRENT NUMBER.

TRANSMISSION NOTICES, FIFTY CENTS FOR EIGHT LINES, EACH INSERTION. FOR LARGER SPACE AND PERMANENT RATES, APPLY AS ABOVE.

THE WORK OF THE FIRE-BUG.

In every hamlet, village, and small town there is occasionally to be found some one with a mania for setting things on fire. As a rule, the torch is applied to an old barn, or a shanty, or a deserted rookery, which is safely placed, and whose destruction does not call for much exertion. The fire is generally touched off between twelve at night and four in the morning, and usually not where it will be likely to imperil life, and it is not a little remarkable that an alarm is very soon afterwards given to the whole neighborhood.

This depraved streak in a man—or in a boy who is about old enough to have a man's vices, without a man's self-control—is excessively dangerous. It is as much of a passion, now and then, as the love of drink, or of gambling, or of horse-racing. It takes hold upon the desire for excitement—upon some innate turn towards lawlessness—and upon a disposition to be spiteful or revengeful. If there is anything which offers much inducement to the crime, then the incentive and the vicious intellect are brought together, and the consequence is a fire.

Just as we were going to press last week, such a fire gave us an item, which we duly noticed, but which calls for more than passing comment. On Bloomfield Avenue, about four or five hundred yards from the centre of the town, stands a two-story wooden building, occupied as a workshop for the manufacture of rounded leather belts for sewing machines. Against the clapboards on the left of the door a loaded wagon had been backed in such a way as to break a somewhat large hole. This hole was what attracted the fire-bug.

About one o'clock in the morning, an early milkman smoothly gliding on his way to Newark with his load, saw the flame, gave the alarm, and the fire was soon extinguished. Out of the hole in the clapboarding was dragged a bag, or loose piece of burlap, in which were papers—the *Sun*, the *Herald*, and *THE BLOOMFIELD CITIZEN*—saturated with kerosene oil. Besides these there were several blasting fuses, and some hanks of tow, together with a box of matches. The work was not that of an inexperienced hand, nor was it the work of any novice in the use or application of combustibles. It was only unsuccessful because there was too much milkman, and too little time for the fire to catch.

When the celebrated "trunk murder" took place in New York city, the *Tribune* proceeded upon the supposition that *some one* had seen the man who committed the crime. It called for that great public eye which never sleeps, to fix with its glance this criminal. It showed why every person who could in any manner reveal the source of the murder should contribute his mite towards the evidence. And this course of conduct was so successful that the real culprit was soon caught and convicted. What detectives could not do, was thus done by the newspaper.

In like manner, we propose to utilize our own machinery, for the detection of this and similar crimes against society. *The man who set that fire will read these lines.* The people who saw him, or who suspect him, will also read them. It is for them to hunt this fire-bug down. We have an organized body of our fellow-citizens who are taking care of our fire interests. To them all these reports should go. We must set the nets wide to catch the fish, and then by sifting and arranging the items, there will be a pretty plain course before a very competent and judicious organization. This information their committee (whoever he or they may be) can then push to completion.

But the *Citizen* wishes to express its own opinion also, based upon personal inquiry. We suggest—and probably a good while after the occurrence and needlessly—that in every such case the *facts* be rigidly investigated. It is always conceivable that one of Mr. Crisp's own employees, or some other person who feels a grudge, may be concerned. Yet we think

that whoever catches *this* fellow catches the person who has set the two other fires which lately aroused us all.

This particular fire-bug is no fool. He has chosen the correct time of night in all three cases, and he has lit two fires which could not well be stopped; and this third one shows why the others were vigorous from the start. This is also a man who can get possession of fuses; who reads the *Sun* and the *Herald* (which are papers of a certain complexion), and have a characteristic class of readers in addition to their higher constituency, being more generally circulated than the *Times*, *Tribune*, or *World*). These are morning papers. That they are *different* morning papers helps to show that the person is probably not a regular subscriber to either. He is a probable resident of the town, too, for here is the *Citizen*, which might naturally have been left where he lives. Had he bought the *Citizen* at the train in going to the city, the chances are even, that—like other papers—he would have left it there, and brought home an evening journal.

The tow is of the kind found where packing or upholstery work is going on. The same is true of the burlap. Fuses point to their own character of man—and this we need not enlarge upon. In short, this fire-bug—whatever be his motive—lives in this vicinity; is a person who keeps late hours, and whose late hours excuse his suspicion; has done the thing before; has prepared his bag and carried it with him; has access to upholsterer's or packing stuff; and, above all, can get hold of these short hanks of cut tow, which are tell-tales of the strongest description.

Let the fire association follow these clues. Let them additionally find what half-grown lad or young man is liable to suspicion. And then, our word for it, the fire-bug will be safely in hand. If he did but know it, as he reads these lines—for he will read them—he only hopes lies in prompt confession. *If he leaves the neighborhood, he will fix suspicion on himself.* He must stay and be caught or he will suffer all the torment of a constant terror.

Nothing that we have here said is to be taken as a slur upon a class of young men in Bloomfield who are at times a sore trouble to good citizens, but who are *not* incendiaries nor thieves nor destitute of some degree of conscience. If they do, now and then, loaf on the corners of the streets; if they are unfortunately too fond of the saloon and bad society and staying out o' nights, this is not necessarily criminal, and they are certainly not as bad as the fire-bug. But they are the very persons who will be suspected—and very unjustly suspected, too—and therefore they owe it to themselves to aid this investigation in every way.

BLOOMFIELD AS A PLACE OF RESIDENCE.

It is a familiar saying that "self-praise is no praise at all," and in the sense in which it is commonly used, it is quite true; but just as a voyage to a foreign land rouses and intensifies one's love of home and its surroundings, and calls vividly to mind the many attractions of the place we dwell in, so also any other means of recalling advantages which, by reason of our familiarity with them, we might be disposed to overlook, should serve to add to that contentment which leads men to feel kindly disposed towards themselves and their neighbors.

For this reason, and with no desire to unduly boast of our merits, we wish to present a few of the elements which go to render our own village a most pleasant place of abode.

The place has been long settled. The elementary experience which new towns have to undergo has long been passed, and Bloomfield has an honorable place in the history of the State.

We are near the great metropolis of New York, and this we share in common with our adjoining townships. With two railroads, and frequent trains, we believe we are safe in asserting that New York has no suburbs within forty minutes' travel which can offer more than we.

Our churches are well attended, and in most flourishing condition. The past two or three years have witnessed the erection of a substantial church and school building by our Roman Catholic friends, the building of new and commodious Sunday-school rooms for the First Presbyterian Church, the renovation and remodeling of the Methodist Church, and that congregation have now undertaken to provide themselves with a Sunday-school room also.

Our public schools are conducted on a broad and enlightened plan, and an additional building for the primary classes has been ordered by the voters. Our Park, the greatest ornament to the town, is made more beautiful, and, with its stately elms, reminds a visitor more of New England than of New Jersey.

Our streets and roads are for the most part in good order, and those which have received special attention are very good indeed. It is only needed that our taxpayers continue to vote a liberal sum for repairs of roads until all the streets be covered with this gravel, which wears almost as well as pavement, and is much easier for horses.

In the matter of sidewalks we are deficient, but this is because people will not take the trouble to look after their own walks as they should. We trust another Spring election will inaugurate a system for the construction of sidewalks which shall remedy this complaint.

Our soil is dry and sandy. The roads grow dusty with provoking haste after

every shower, but that proves that the under-drainage is excellent.

The healthfulness of the town is unusually good. The statistics furnished by the State Board of Health show this to be the fact, and we intend soon to lay before our readers in a separate article the undoubted proof of this statement.

We have gas in all our principal streets, and we are offered a water supply for public and private use on terms which invite our most serious and candid consideration.

Our people are law-abiding, self-respecting, and industrious. We have a large number of manufacturers—more than any other township in the county. We have a savings bank and an insurance company, and we know of none in any other of the townships.

We are not in debt, and never have been. If we have preferred to wait for our luxuries rather than to borrow the money to pay for them, we have only pursued a policy in public affairs which all men approve in private life.

We are in the position of the man who owns the house he lives in, and from this time on we are free to procure the improvements which we all admit are desirable, and we are able to pay for them when we get them.

From this brief summary of the favorable character of Bloomfield as a place of residence, we think all our citizens and neighbors will derive satisfaction, and we think it furnishes good reasons with which to invite a friend or acquaintance, who seeks a quiet country home, to come and cast in his lot with ours.

We believe the time has now come when the people of Bloomfield should determine that whatever is needed to advance the interests of the town shall be done.

If we can procure a good supply of water on favorable terms, let us do it as soon as possible. If cross-walks and sidewalks are ever to be laid, let us procure them at once, and get the good of them. If any road in frequent use by the public needs to be reconstructed, let it be done without needless delay. In brief, let us stir ourselves to attend to those matters which are directly before us, and, by making these improvements as their value is presented to us, we shall find that our time and money are well spent, and that we are doing our share to advance the beauty and attractiveness of this town, for which nature has kindly done so much.

ELSEWHERE in our paper will be found an article from the N.Y. *Evangelist* giving directions for the discovery and destruction of the currant worm. We publish it because one of our subscribers has already made use of these directions and reports that he finds them entirely reliable.

We think the School Trustees will do well to caution the children not to run over the Park. The grass seed has been sown, and although it is a little early to say "Keep off the grass," it is certainly time to say "Keep off the Park."

THE vexed problems presented by the existence of vice in the world are of great interest to many minds. A novel view of the question is presented in another column. Be it understood, the *Citizen* neither endorses nor condemns the views there expressed.

The Seminary Lecture on Charles Kingsley.

The subject of Mr. Duffield's Seminary Lecture, Wednesday evening, was Charles Kingsley. It was a fine piece of work, and those who listened to it will certainly be new or renewed interest in the writings of Kingsley, on the part of those who listened so attentively to it. There was little fun in this lecture, but much instruction. It was not exciting, but exceedingly graphic and interesting. The description of Kingsley's appearance, and his study, were fine specimens of word painting. The lecturer, very wisely, devoted much more time than usual to the life and character of his author. Too frequently, the less said about the private life of a public man the better it is for the enjoyment his work. The force of noble acting, beautiful writing, and eloquent speaking is so frequently weakened by the lack of conformity between the man and his words that an example of the contrary sort is very refreshing. Do our Sunday-school libraries, by the way, contain much of Kingsley? We should like to know very much, and hope to be informed.

We understand that before another season, carpenters and painters are to be called in, to render the lecture room more inviting to those who have not become hardened by familiarity with the old style of college rooms. This is well. The next lecture will be delivered on Friday instead of Wednesday evening. Subject, Oliver Wendell Holmes.

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Bloomfield and Montclair Directory.

The work of canvassing for the names for the Bloomfield and Montclair Directory, which will be published by I. P. Baldwin with the Directory of the Oranges, has been completed. It will be printed as quickly as possible and delivered to subscribers. Great care has been taken in making the canvass that no name may be omitted and that the correct addresses may be given. In addition to the general directory there will be a complete directory of the streets, schools, houses, societies, etc. Mr. [redacted] Post, of Franklin Street, is authority to receive subscriptions, or they may be sent directly to the publisher at [redacted] Baldwin, Orange, N.J.

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